

ROUND 1 INTERVIEW
May 2, 2019

JOEL DAHMEN (-5)



DOUG MILNE: Joel Dahmen, thanks for joining us. You opened with a 5-under 66 today. I overheard you telling Lisa that you really felt like you've been playing some good golf the last four or five weeks. If you could kind of just expand on that a little bit and just a couple comments on today's 66.

JOEL DAHMEN: Yeah, I've been playing well today since THE PLAYERS, so I don't know, that's six or seven weeks probably. It's all with my putting. My putting comes and goes. Try to be more consistent at it and it's been better. Worked a lot with my coach back home, Rob Rashell, to be more consistent week in and week out and that's kind of been it. In the last, I don't know, must have been five or six weeks, it's been close. I haven't played great on the weekend. I haven't had kind of that one round that really gets me going, but hopefully we can change that this week.

Q. How long was that putt?

JOEL DAHMEN: Fifteen, 18 feet, something like that.

Q. Did you feel like a 66 out there today or did you play better than that or worse than that?

JOEL DAHMEN: It felt like that. Us golfers, we always think we can do something better. I had an easy up-and-down on 14, the drivable hole; just didn't hit a good chip and a good putt. Felt like I could get one more, but I made a good par save on 17, so probably evened it out.

I hit a bunch of greens. I think I might have hit 15 or 16 and out here if you hit a bunch of greens, you're going to be okay. I drove the ball well, so it felt -- we were walking off the greens, my caddie was like, "That was really easy." I was like, "Yeah, on your end it was. It wasn't easy on mine." Yeah, it felt great, it felt good.

Q. I want to be completely clear on the moustache. Was that just a Zurich thing and how does it come off -- go ahead.

JOEL DAHMEN: Well, it started as me celebrating a quarter million dollars at THE PLAYERS because I was the richest man alive after that day. So I was drunk, shaved it into a moustache and then it just kind of kept going after that. I think the next week was Valspar and I was leading after the first round or played well or close, kept going. Then there was a boys trip in Puntacana because our wives didn't go, so I played with Harkins and my caddie with a buddy, we just flew down. We just all shaved moustaches because the wives weren't

there. And then all of a sudden it was like, well, we have to keep it going for Zurich. I was going to keep it going, but I rinsed one on 18 and I made bogey for my partner there and I just had to shave it after that.

Q. You talked about needing momentum. Do you think this could be the round that gives you momentum?

JOEL DAHMEN: No. I need to do it on the weekend, I need to do it on Sunday, I think. I mean, Saturday's fine, too. I've had a couple top-5s. Like last year I finished second, but I was behind like 8 or something, so I was never really in the golf tournament. Greenbrier, Kevin Na kind of ran away with it, so I wasn't really around.

I want to be in the hunt with nine to play, that's the goal. I haven't really been there yet. I'm good enough to. I should be there. I should have chances by now. I just kind of need to get out of my own way and let it go.

Q. Is this your first time here? Have you played here before? What is it about the place you like?

JOEL DAHMEN: Played here last year. It was great last year. I played pretty well. I think I finished 15th or 20th, somewhere around there. I like harder golf courses, scores lower -- the harder it is, normally the better it is for me because I drive it straight, hit a lot of greens.

Prefer places like this. I like setups where you know like par's okay out here. Par's not going to get you too far behind and there's some holes where you just have to accept par and I like that.

Q. If you were able to see it live, where were you watching the final round of the Masters, what were you thinking, how did it all --

JOEL DAHMEN: I was the only idiot in the world who didn't watch it. That weekend we have a HackMasters, which is almost more important than the Masters. It's just a bar tournament and I played it for five or six years now in Scottsdale with a buddy and it starts at 7:00 a.m. and you're drinking all day.

Unfortunately, the Masters was moved up and so we were out playing a scramble on Sunday morning, drinking a lot and having a great time. Somebody came up on like our 16th hole and was like, "Hey, Tiger's going to win the Masters." I'm like, "Cool, I can't believe I just missed all that."

I mean, I saw all the highlights. Sunday and Monday I just spent all day just catching up on the Masters stuff. I think I pretty much saw all of it, but not live.

I can tell you, I mean, we're all the happiest people alive, thankfully for him, awesome

comeback, glad he won. What he's done for the sport and what he continues to do for us. I'm out here because of him, we play for this much money because of him, I have a house because of him. So yeah, I think it was awesome.

Q. What course was it and how many players and how did you do?

JOEL DAHMEN: We won actually, so it was awesome.

Q. Do you get a green jacket?

JOEL DAHMEN: You do if you win. So there's two portions. There's a little more of a gambling side, which we won the important side. shot a little 59 scramble, which is pretty good. But it's a two-day event and you pick two players, two Masters players that have made the cut. You pick an A player and a B player and then they go with your score. If you pick the right guys and you play well, then you win the HackMasters and you actually get a green jacket for that. There's a whole gambling side of it where you just bid on your own team and we won that side, but we have not won the green jacket at the HackMasters.

Q. Who did you pick?

JOEL DAHMEN: I went with the homer pick of Keith Mitchell, who totally let me down. Way to go, buddy. And I picked Finau, who played great. So I was there, I just needed Keith to do something great on the weekend and he didn't.

Q. What course?

JOEL DAHMEN: McCormick ranch. It's where the Phoenix Open Monday is every year.

Q. Did Tiger get a chance to watch the highlights?

JOEL DAHMEN: There are highlights out there. Hopefully, they don't get to you guys. Yeah, it's a fun weekend. It's a great time and obviously it's too bad I missed probably the greatest Masters of all time, or the greatest moments.

Q. What time did that come on, 7:00?

JOEL DAHMEN: It's a great question. I was drunk, I don't know. Like let's see, it was over by noon, we're on the west coast, so I don't know.

Q. But you got through 16 holes by noon.

JOEL DAHMEN: It was pretty good. It was great for us.

Q. You would have to give that up, not to jump too far ahead, if you would actually play in the Masters?

JOEL DAHMEN: There's a lot of discussion about that with Harkins, a couple buddies. Pat Perez has always played in the HackMasters because I think he's only won once until like two or three years ago when he started top-15 in the world and he won, and it's like, "Where's Pat, where's Pat?" He's kind of the man of this whole event. So it was kind of funny because everybody like gets mad when Pat plays well so he can't play at the HackMasters. It's a pretty big deal in Scottsdale.

Q. As someone who you got to see part of the comeback last year up close, played with him, would you ever see that coming? Obviously you played very well when you played with him.

JOEL DAHMEN: Yeah, I think seeing him and being around the TOUR Championship playing well, his game was back. I mean, he's never going to be the old Tiger of 2000 or whatever, it's just not possible. Yeah, week in and week out to be one of the best players, absolutely. When I played with him, I mean, can't win every week, but every time I play with a top-10 player in the world, I think they should win every week. I mean, I was hoping for it. Yeah, I definitely wouldn't say I saw it coming or bet on it or predicted it, but yeah.

Q. When you talk about what you just said a minute ago when you play with a top-10 player and you think they should win, you said earlier too that in terms of chances on the back nine that you should have had by now, do you look at yourself when you see some top-10 players --

JOEL DAHMEN: They're way better than I am.

Q. I appreciate that. They have a higher ranking and things like that. But how do you look at yourself in terms of measuring up to them and still keep your confidence?

JOEL DAHMEN: That's a great question. I mean, put it this way, like week in and week out or over the course of a career, they're going to be way better than I am.

But golf is awesome because on any given week or given day, anybody can beat anybody. Yeah, like I played as well as Rory today and I beat everybody else in the field. That's great and there's no reason I can't do that for three more days. I think I'm getting to a point where I actually believe it where all right, you hit it straight enough, you putt well enough, you chip well enough, all that garbage, it's great. I think there's just believing in it and there's believing in it in different levels.

Like when I went to Puntacana, I went down there to win a golf tournament. For the first time in my Tour career, I went down there to win a golf tournament. I obviously tried to win this HackMasters thing because I'm the best player there.

Now it's like those guys expect week in and week out to be on the leaderboard and to be around. Am I that good? No, but when I'm playing my best I can compete with a lot of

people. Is my best as good as Rory's? Absolutely not. Is my best top-10 in the world? No. But is it good enough to compete week in and week out? Absolutely.

Q. Did you play the PGA last year?

JOEL DAHMEN: No. This will be my first major, the PGA will be. I haven't played the U.S. Open. Last year I was close. I bogeyed my last hole and then lost in a playoff to get in. But I actually circled Pebble Beach this year. I mean, I want to be there more so than I want to be at Augusta. Pebble's my favorite place on earth. You know, being close last year and should have -- I mean, I bogeyed the par 5 coming in. So I really, I mean I'm really focusing on that sectional qualifier in Columbus. That's my goal.

Q. Are you looking forward at all to Bethpage?

JOEL DAHMEN: I heard it's really hard. I don't know. I mean, it's a big purse, I like money.

Q. It's your first major.

JOEL DAHMEN: Yeah, I don't really care. It's great, I love crowds. Obviously this event is like a major. All the crowds, the golf course, how they treat us here is awesome. I'll be excited but I won't be like, oh, sweet, flying people in and doing all that stuff. It will be pretty normal for me.

Q. Are you playing next week?

JOEL DAHMEN: No, I'm taking a week off.

Q. Anything drive you to go see Bethpage before you get there?

JOEL DAHMEN: No. Do they have a video game for it? I might do that. I'm playing with Lucas Glover this week, I think he won there at the U.S. Open, so I'll ask him a couple questions. If you hit it on the fairway and on the green and hit it below the hole, I think every golf course is good.

Q. How many players are in that HackMasters?

JOEL DAHMEN: I think it caps at like 65 teams, so it's probably 60 teams of two people. It's a best-ball first day, scramble second day. Handicapped. I mean, you guys should really think about it.

Q. What do they play you off of?

JOEL DAHMEN: They play me as a plus 3 and I have to play the back tees. And then everyone else gets, I think they make it 2 added on to their handicap and they play forwards, so kind of translated to a plus 5.

Q. What's the logo on the green jacket?

JOEL DAHMEN: It's probably copyrighted or whatever, it's probably infringement, but I think it's the same logo just with the pin in Arizona. We don't tell anybody about that. Is that not allowed?

DOUG MILNE: Thanks for your time.